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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (continued) (A/48/46; A/C.4/48/L.2)

1. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan) noted the valuable work being done by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), which had submitted a comprehensive report (A/48/46). It was essential for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and non-governmental organizations to continue to cooperate with UNSCEAR.

2. To reduce the real risk to man and the environment from atomic radiation, the large stockpiles of nuclear weapons had to be progressively dismantled and destroyed. Pakistan strongly endorsed the important steps already taken in that direction by the major nuclear Powers, just as it had consistently supported the early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Pending its conclusion, it would welcome a similar regional or bilateral agreement; and it had also put forward a number of proposals for establishing a nuclear non-proliferation regime in its own region.

3. If all nations were to benefit from the many useful peaceful applications of nuclear technology, close cooperation between States was essential. Both developed and developing countries could work together towards that common objective within a rational and equitable framework. Nuclear technology strictly for peaceful uses in the areas of energy, medicine, agriculture and other scientific fields must be shared if the developing countries were to prepare themselves for immediate and future challenges.

4. The world was facing the dual problems of shrinking energy resources and serious environmental degradation owing to the utilization of fossil fuels. Pakistan itself faced an acute shortage of conventional fuel and energy resources, as did many other States, which inhibited efforts to improve the lives of the people. The risk of proliferation could not be made a pretext for not sharing the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology with all peoples.

5. Equally important was the need to share nuclear-related safety technology and information, of which the Chernobyl disaster had been a sad reminder. It was the responsibility of the industrialized States that had exported nuclear reactors to developing countries to help them maintain them and to continue to provide vital spare parts. Despite the valid concern over nuclear non-proliferation, the requirements of proper maintenance and acceptable safety standards called for a more balanced and pragmatic approach. In that connection, IAEA was to be commended for taking the lead in ensuring the flow of safety-related information among States, a trend which should be fostered in the interests of all.

6. Mr. VERDIER (Argentina) observed that the depletion of the ozone layer in the southern hemisphere, an area of the world usually more sheltered from the effects of environmental contamination, had prompted wide-ranging debate in Argentina on environmental questions, including the effects of atomic radiation. There had been a broad public polemic over the possible transport of a plutonium

(Mr. Verdier, Argentina)

shipment through Drake Passage in the extreme south; and a number of environmental groups had decried the feasibility study done on the possible construction of a nuclear storage site in Patagonia.

7. Argentina added its voice to the strong international protests against the recent explosion of a nuclear device by China, which violated the moratorium declared by three other nuclear Powers and affected the current international climate favourable to the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

8. The various bilateral and multilateral agreements signed by Argentina with its neighbours and with IAEA, and its observance of international guidelines for the export of nuclear materials, were proof of the exclusively peaceful aims of the Argentine nuclear plan. Its National Atomic Energy Commission was conducting an interesting programme for the use of radioisotopes in the fields of health, research, industry and agriculture and was expanding its safeguards programme to protect the population at large, nuclear-industry workers and the environment. It had therefore followed the successive UNSCEAR reports with great interest.

9. As a sponsor of the draft resolution on the item, Argentina urged its adoption by consensus.

10. Mr. HEINE (Marshall Islands), speaking on behalf of the States members of the South Pacific Forum, commended the excellent work being done by UNSCEAR and fully endorsed draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2. The South Pacific region was still subject to a significant number of environmental threats like global warming and climate change, and the peoples of the region continued to be deeply concerned about the impact of atomic radiation arising from both atmospheric and underground nuclear testing.

11. The Forum countries were pleased to note that, as a result of the formal testing moratorium, until recently no nuclear tests had been conducted in the South Pacific for more than a year, and they remained committed to ensuring that there should be no resumption. At the twenty-fourth session of the South Pacific Forum, held in Nauru in August 1993, the Forum Heads of Government had once again addressed the issue of nuclear testing and published a communiqué which would be made available as document A/48/359. In it, the Forum countries warmly welcomed the decisions taken by the United States, the Russian Federation and France to extend their testing moratoria and urged that they should be maintained indefinitely, and they called on the other nuclear Powers to formally declare such moratoria. They welcomed the United States and French commitment to the early negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and urged all the nuclear-weapon States to participate actively in the negotiations. The decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament in August 1993 to provide a negotiating mandate to its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban was welcome.

12. Those promising developments, however, had been interrupted on 5 October by an underground nuclear test by China, which ran counter to the spirit of hope engendered by the forward-looking decisions taken by three of the nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Heine, Marshall Islands)

13. The Forum Heads of Government were also concerned about recent reports that nuclear wastes were being dumped in the North Pacific, contrary to the intent of the 1972 London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by the Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter. The nations and peoples of the South Pacific, furthermore, remained concerned about the possible dangers of plutonium shipments through the Pacific region.

14. The CHAIRMAN announced that Pakistan, Spain and Greece had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2.

15. Draft resolution A/C.4/48/L.2 was adopted unanimously.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of item 83.

AGENDA ITEM 89: SCIENCE AND PEACE (A/C.4/48/L.3)

17. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, introduced draft decision A/C.4/48/L.3 on science and peace. Because the report from the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on activities by Member States and interested organizations in connection with the International Week of Science and Peace, which had been requested in the last General Assembly resolution adopted on the item, resolution 45/70, had never been submitted as requested, the draft decision would have consideration of agenda item 89 deferred until the forty-ninth session with a view to receiving that report of the Secretary-General. The importance of science as a factor for peace and the contributions that scientists could make to disarmament, peace, security, well-being and sustainable development could not be underestimated.

18. Draft decision A/C.4/48/L.3 was adopted unanimously.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of item 89.

AGENDA ITEM 90: QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE RELEVANT ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

20. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should defer consideration of the item until the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

21. It was so decided.

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 90.

23. In accordance with established practice, he suggested that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to submit the reports on the items just concluded directly to the General Assembly.

24. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.50 p.m.